



For Immediate Release
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River District Board to Consider Possible Shoshone Call Reduction

At its next quarterly board meeting on January 21-22, the Colorado River Water Conservation District Board of Directors will consider an option to temporarily reduce the amount of Colorado River water flowing to the Shoshone Hydroelectric Power Plant in order to maximize the amount of water that can be stored in upstream reservoirs. A "relaxation" of Xcel Energy's Shoshone power plant's water right is expected to provide benefits for water users on both sides of the Continental Divide that rely upon West Slope water storage, but poses problems for the West Slope as well. Water organizations from both east and west sides of the divide have been discussing this option as a possible way to increase storage in drought-depleted reservoirs.

In concept, the call reduction would temporarily reduce Colorado River flows at the power plant, located in Glenwood Canyon, to no less than 500 cubic feet per second (cfs). Upstream reservoirs would then be able to store water instead of releasing water to meet the power plant's senior water right. The Colorado River has been flowing at approximately 600 cfs above the Shoshone power plant this winter. In return for temporarily curtailing its demand, Xcel Energy would be compensated for the loss of revenue caused by its decreased ability to generate power with its hydroelectric turbines. West of the Shoshone Power plant, at the Colorado River's confluence with the Roaring Fork River at Glenwood Springs, flows of no less than 850 cfs would be maintained.

The West Slope could benefit from this arrangement by gaining additional assurance that a cornerstone of its stored water supply, Green Mountain Reservoir, would be able to fill by the end of spring runoff. East Slope water providers, such as Denver Water and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, could gain additional stored water from this arrangement in particular at Denver Water's Williams Fork Reservoir and possibly Dillon and Granby reservoirs, if conditions are optimal.

The West Slope is concerned that curtailing the call may set an adverse precedent. The Shoshone plant holds one of the oldest, and therefore most senior, water rights on the West Slope. Its rights to 1,408 cfs of water, with priority dates of 1905 and 1940, are a controlling force on the mainstem Colorado River, ensuring that reliable flows are met at its Glenwood Canyon location and then passing these flows to downstream users. The River District believes that no future Shoshone call reduction should be obtained without the West Slope's cooperation.

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